

REBECCA COHN eNEWSLETTER

for the twenty-fourth Assembly District

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Cohn's Comment



A Less Than Perfect Budget

By now we know that this year's budget has something for all of us to dislike. It was another year of "Sophie's" choices. Not one good choice was available when faced with a deficit over \$14 billion. Regardless of one's opinion about the cause of our State's historic deficit, we all agree that certain services provided by government need to be maintained. On a positive note, I'd like to point out a few of the services we were able to protect in this year's budget. For example, we kept California's promise of a public college education for every qualified student by ensuring their admission to a four year public university. This includes the class of 2004, which had been diverted to community colleges in earlier versions of the budget. We also increased support for every K-12 student by increasing per-pupil spending. In addition, we were able to provide them with thousands of new textbooks. Unfortunately, we were not able to maintain 2003 tuition levels or the teacher's tax credit. In a year when we were not able to ask billionaires to tighten their belts, we were forced to ask our teachers and parents to make tremendous sacrifices. We need to do better.

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Welcome to the e-newsletter for the 24th Assembly District. Our aim is to keep you up-to-date on issues concerning you, your family, the District, and the State. This letter will also highlight the legislative accomplishments and programs of your Assemblymember, Rebecca Cohn.

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Cohn Reaches Out To Families To Promote Children's Safety

Cohn Conducts "Stranger Danger" Camp

Working with local law enforcement agencies, Assemblywoman Cohn helps parents teach their children about safety and what to do if they encounter a stranger through her "Stranger Danger" Camp and Safety Resource Faire. "Stranger Danger" brings children of all ages to school campuses and community centers around the district, providing a fun environment for them to meet public safety officers and learn from experts about how to stay safe. Aside from a thirty-minute class taught by the Sheriff's Department on safety in the community, each child is digitally fingerprinted and photographed by the District Attorney's Office. Chipper the CHP Chipmunk has been known to pay a visit, as has the Shark cruiser. ♦



The next "Stranger Danger" Camp is September 18th at Ruskin School, 1401 Turlock Lane, San Jose. Please contact Julie Lind in the District Office for more information at (408) 369-8170.

We preserved health care coverage for the children of working families, guaranteed that every child with a catastrophic illness will receive adequate care, and made sure that the aged and disabled will be able to stay in their homes and not be forced into institutions. Cities and counties will have a secure, stable stream of revenue in future years to provide for vital police and fire services and over twenty-five separate state mandates on local governments and schools have been eliminated.

These are challenging times for California and we struggle to provide the appropriate level of essential government services that we all want. Being a good steward of the taxpayer's contribution to government is a great responsibility, and I will continue my work to streamline government, eliminate waste, and make it run more efficiently. From removing government impediments for businesses, to laying a new network of broadband in California, to forcing the Department of Corrections to competitively bid their medical contracts, I intend to hold our government accountable.◆

– Rebecca Cohn

Cohn Helps Save IHSS and Filipino Veterans Benefits

Health Committee Chair Rebecca Cohn held a hearing in San Jose in June in response to the proposed budget cuts to providers of In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) and Filipino Veterans. The Governor's budget called for care providers, who care for seniors and individuals with disabilities, to take a pay cut from \$11 an hour to minimum wage along with the elimination of their benefits. Similar care in nursing homes can cost \$30,000 a month. Care recipients detailed how they required assistance for everyday activities, such as bathing, cooking, and using toilets. Many providers stated they would have to give up the business if the cuts went through.

Filipino Veterans testified that the benefits they receive are crucial and fulfilled the promise they were made when they enlisted.

Both programs were spared in the final budget.◆

COHN PROTECTS FAMILIES FROM ABUSE

Assemblywoman Rebecca Cohn had her legislation, AB 141 that will protect families from abuse, signed into law.

Previously, juries in domestic violence trials were not allowed to hear evidence that the abuser also battered the children.

"Domestic violence is violence against the family not just the spouse. How can a jury not be allowed to hear evidence of child abuse?" stated Cohn.

Statistics demonstrate that at least half of all abusive husbands also abuse their children. The more severe the abuse of the mother, the worse the child abuse. As many as 70% of abused women in shelters report the presence of child abuse in the home.

Under current law, prior evidence of elder and dependent adult abuse is admissible but not child abuse. "Most jurors intuitively understand that people who would physically abuse family members are far more likely to have a history of such violence. The current exclusion of children creates a false impression among jurors that the abuser has never engaged in this type of violence when, in fact, they very often have," explained Assemblywoman Cohn.◆

Cohn Protects Open Space Environments

The Governor signed Assemblywoman Rebecca Cohn's Assembly Bill (AB) 1195, which prohibits the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) from using its power of eminent domain to take land from unwilling property owners in coastal areas of San Mateo County.

In an unprecedented action, this bill calms many people's fears by statutorily banning the District's use of eminent domain in proposed annexation areas. Eminent domain continues to be one of the most contentious political issues that divide property owners from their elected officials. Despite constitutional protections, many property owners remain deeply suspicious of local officials' power to condemn private property. These concerns fueled some of the opposition to the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District's proposal to annex territory in coastal San Mateo County.◆